

Medical Assistance
State North Carolina

THERAPEUTIC LEAVE

(a) Each Medicaid eligible patient who is occupying a Nursing Facility (NF) bed or an Intermediate Care for the Mentally Retarded (ICF-MR) bed for which the North Carolina Medicaid Program is then paying reimbursement shall be entitled to take up to 60 days of therapeutic leave in any calendar year from any such bed without the facility in which the bed is located suffering any loss of reimbursement during the period of leave.

(b) The taking of such leave must be for therapeutic purposes only, and must be ordered by the patient's attending physician. The necessity for such leave shall be documented in the patient's plan of care and therapeutic justification for each instance of such leave entered into the patient's medical record.

(c) Facilities must reserve a therapeutically absent patient's bed for him, and are prohibited from deriving any Medicaid revenue for that patient other than the reimbursement for that bed during the period of absence. Facilities shall be reimbursed at their full current Medicaid bed rate for a bed reserved due to therapeutic leave. Facilities shall not be reimbursed for therapeutic leave days taken which exceed the legal limit.

(d) No more than 15 consecutive therapeutic leave days may be taken without approval of the Division of Medical Assistance.

(e) The therapeutic justification for such absence shall be subject to review by the State or its agent during scheduled on-site medical reviews.

(f) Facilities must keep a cumulative record of therapeutic leave days taken by each patient for reference and audit purposes. In addition, patients on therapeutic leave must be noted as such on the facility's midnight census. Facilities shall bill Medicaid for approved therapeutic leave days as regular residence days.

(g) The official record of therapeutic leave days taken for each patient shall be maintained by the State or its agent.

(h) Entitlement to therapeutic leave is not applicable in cases when the therapeutic leave is for the purpose of receiving either inpatient or nursing services provided either elsewhere or at a different level of care in the facility of current residence when such services are or will be paid for by Medicaid.

(i) Transportation from a facility to the site of therapeutic leave is not considered to be an emergency; therefore, ambulance service for this purpose shall not be reimbursed by Medicaid.